



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 24, 2024

Voter Turnout Among Gun Owners Greater Than Among Non-owners

[In speaking to the NRA's national convention on May 18](#), Donald Trump made it sound as if the average gun owner couldn't care less about the upcoming election. But a study done in 2020 rebuts that presumption: Not only do gun owners vote more consistently and reliably than non-owners, they turn out in ever greater numbers.

FactCheck.org, a project funded primarily by the liberal Annenberg Foundation, was quick to point out the alleged disparity: "Trump's Wrong: Gun Owners More Likely to Vote." And they're more likely to vote for Trump than for Biden.



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Said Trump:

But one thing I'll say, and I say it as friends, we've got to get gun owners to vote because you know what? I don't know what it is — perhaps it's a form of rebellion because you're rebellious people, aren't you? — but gun owners don't vote.

What is that all about? I've heard that. I heard it a few weeks ago. If the gun owners voted, we would swamp them at levels that nobody's ever seen before. So I think you're a rebellious bunch, but let's be rebellious and vote this time. Okay?

Later in that same speech he reiterated the claim:

And remember what I told you is so true. That gun owners don't vote. It's so crazy. They should be ...

I would think that they would vote more than any other group of people. And it's just the opposite. They don't vote. And they have to get out and vote...

If gun owners voted, we would swamp them (Democrats) at levels no one has ever seen.

Mark Joslyn, a professor of political science at the University of Kansas, called Trump's statement "false," noting that "Gun owners, compared to non-gun owners, tend to vote more, not less. In addition, political participation (including voting) increases with the number of guns owned."

In his 2020 book [The Gun Gap: The Influence of Gun Ownership on Political Behavior and Attitudes](#), Joslyn noted that not only is there a gap between gun owners and non-gun owners in their turnout for elections, but the gap is widening.

He noted further that "older people vote more than younger people, and gun ownership and age are



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positively associated.” He noted further than income, education, and church attendance are also positively related to voter turnout.

What Joslyn missed is this: Turnout among gun owners increased steadily from 1972 onward, peaking at nearly 80 percent in the presidential elections in 2004 and 2008. But since then that percentage has dropped. And that was Trump’s point.

To make certain that gun owners are galvanized into voting in November, the Trump campaign has teamed up with the Republican National Committee to launch “Gun Owners for Trump.” Its mission is “to deliver President Trump a second term and put a stop to Biden’s ‘no-compromise approach’ to dismantling America’s gun laws.”

Joslyn said nothing about the enormous jump in private gun ownership that has taken place just in the last 10 years. An NBC News poll taken last November revealed that more than half of American voters — 52 percent — say that they, or someone in their household, owns a gun. Ten years earlier, in February 2013, that number was 42 percent. As Republican strategist Micah Roberts noted, “That’s a very stunning number.”

Further, since the last presidential election Americans have been buying more than a million firearms every month, many for the first time. With 150 million Americans now armed, it’s no wonder that Trump seeks every one of their votes.

There are some obstacles, however. Gun owners remember Trump’s decision to ban bump stocks following the 2018 mass shooting in Las Vegas. And corruption at the highest levels of the National Rifle Association has seriously dented both membership and revenue at that pro-gun organization.

But they will also remember that he successfully nominated Supreme Court Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett, which resulted in the earth-shaking decision in *Bruen* in 2022. The reverberations of that ruling — declaring invalid any Second Amendment infringements by governments without a “historical analogue” — continue to be felt almost daily across the land.

They will also remember — or will be reminded by “Gun Owners for Trump” — that he successfully nominated some 300 federal court judges who continue to fight for that “original understanding” in Second Amendment battles at the local, state, and national levels.



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